

# UNIQUE PLAYGROUNDS FOR SWELTERING CHILDREN

## Fifty-two Vacation Schools Started to Provide Young Humans With a Refuge During the Dogdays

A street is a better place to be than a kitchen days like these, and yet a street is no place for youngsters to be with the wind dead and the slow, hateful heat crawling in by inch into every hall and partly shaded corner. And the streets down where the children are—but O. Henry has said all that. And it does not take a heart as big as his to feel the pity of it.

But they have found a few places that are better for the youngsters than either kitchen or street, and no less than ten thousand of the children who needed them most found their way there last week. Before the summer is out they will have doubled or better. Mostly in churches, or rather in parish houses, in the crowded parts of town four or five societies of benevolent purpose have set up vacation "schools" to give young humans a refuge from the open anger of the dog days and in a quiet way to keep them busy.

There are fifty-two of these schools, each in charge of a teacher who is also a physical director and a playmate. Most of the teachers are students from the colleges—Vassar, Smith, Barnard and Wellesley, and young men from Cornell, Columbia and Yale. The pay is \$7.50 a week and the pleasure of doing good. Most of the teachers spend their \$7.50 on



## Time Divided Between Games and Serious Occupations That Relieve the Stress of the Summer Heat

who are sick and have to be put to bed by the sick little girls very early in the afternoon.

One young lady said she was going to make a doll nightdress right away for a doll she had seen hanging over a cot through the big window in Fifteenth street, where you can see the little hospital people. It hung there at noon yesterday and at 5 o'clock the little girl who owned it hadn't taken it down. The nurse took it away then, not the little girl.

The boys, on the other hand, didn't mind owing they were too busy to hanker after folk dances or gymnastics or anything else that would make them bustle. They gathered over the checkerboards, challenging the winner of the games for hours ahead, and played stick knives, jacks and other quiet things. A few of them took the first dive into the mysteries of hammock making and discovered how many more thumbs they had than they had ever supposed. Their teachers were not quite so conscientious about improving the shining and blistering hours as the young college women were who overlooked the doling of the girls.

The vacation schools are under the direction of the Church Vacation Work and Play Schools and the National Vacation Schools. The headquarters of both



A Class in Sewing



Playing School



Playing Checkers

their youngsters anyway, and perhaps some of the pleasure sometimes.

It was a heartening thing to look in on some of these classes on that dripping and unpeppable Tuesday of last week when the schools were getting under way. Two or three were out on the roofs, high over the sweltering town, and such breezes as were not nailed down flat to the pavement by the hard driven sunbeams brought them a waft of coolness now and

then. It was far better than the street, at any rate, and there were no cars to dodge.

In their coolest summer things the little girls drifted about under the awnings in some pretty, not too boisterous, folk dances, and afterward camped in the shade on little slat fashioned chairs and took their sewing lesson at their ease. With a good many screwings up of eyes and tongues and squintings at needle

## NEW YORK WAS BOMBARDED JUST 137 YEARS AGO

ONE hundred and thirty-seven years ago yesterday occurred the first and only bombardment of New York city by a hostile fleet. It was an attack of which no previous notice of intention had been given. One hundred and thirty-seven years ago to-morrow the British ended their debarcation of troops on Staten Island, preparatory to their transfer to the Long Island shore, in anticipation of the battle of Long Island.

Roginald P. Bolton of 633 West 158th street has for years devoted himself to the study of the early history of New York, particularly during Revolutionary times. He is at present preparing for early publication a book covering the American struggle for independence so far as it was carried on on the waters of New York city. From the material he has gathered the following account of the bombardment and the operations which accompanied it has been summarized:

May and June saw the arrival in New York harbor of many British warships and transports loaded with troops and supplies. The disparity between the Colonial forces on the water and the naval power of Great Britain was marked, but the patriots showed no sign of yielding without a struggle. Volunteers were called for from the troops for marine service and me promptly responded from the battalions of Webb, Parsons, Baldwin, Nixon, Tully and Read. They were ordered to report for duty on May 23 in a flotilla of whaleboats.

Every craft in New York harbor that could be impressed by the patriots into active service was obtained, and Benjamin Tupper, a Lieutenant in Col. Ward's Massachusetts regiment, took command of the American vessels. It was a motley collection, including sloops, schooners, whaleboats and what were known as "row galleys." Commodore Tupper hoisted his flag on the sloop Hester and later on the little privateer Lady Washington, which afterward did much active work against the enemy in the Sound.

In this collection of vessels were the Shaks, Spitfire, General Putnam, General Schuyler and Monticome. Congress agreed to supplement them by "sundry gondolas and fire rafts to prevent the men of war and enemy's ships from coming into New York Bay or Narrows." A superintendent of construction and a

ship's carpenter were sent from Philadelphia for the purpose of aiding in building these vessels.

While these preparations were going on the British warships kept arriving. On July 12 the advance guard of the new British fleet, led by the Eagle, flying the flag of Gen. Howe's lately ennobled brother, was seen from the Atlantic Highlands. It was expected that the British plan of attack would prove to be to force the passage of the North River at all hazards and land troops in the rear of the American position, thus cooping the American army up between the British army in Westchester and the British fleet.

Lord Howe seems to have been due to a determination to keep the marine force in the background.

Early on the morning of Saturday, July 12, the British frigates Phoenix and Rose, together with the schooner Tryal and two tenders of the frigates, the Shuldham and

the Charlotta, hove up anchor and stood boldly up the North River. As they passed the city, keeping well over toward the Jersey shore, their heavy guns opened on the unsuspecting town.

Scenes of panic followed. The unexpectedness and early hour of the attack, for it was hardly daylight, had given no time for the removal of women and children, the helpless and other non-combatants. Many were killed in their homes or in the streets as they ran out of their houses in alarm.

Anthony Glean fired the first gun from the Battery at the hostile ships. He declared that the ball struck the hull of the Rose. The fire on both sides was furious.

With every gun that could be brought to bear the American gunners did their best to stay the passage of the ships, which as they approached the fortifications at Jeffrey's Hook must have faced

considerable danger. Bags of sand were piled high on the vessel's decks as a defence against the rifle fire expected as they passed within range of the batteries on Fort Washington and Fort Constitution.

But what Gen. Greene described as the American gunners' "most terrible fire" proved ineffective to stop the passage of the British ships, as with full sail and a favoring tide, with the little tenders shielded from harm between them and shrouded to an extent in the smoke from their own broadsides, they passed out of range of the last guns of Fort Washington and came to anchor in the quiet waters just above Spuyten Duyvil Creek.

They had not been there long, however, before the little guns on what was then known as Cockhill Fort and those of Fort No. 1, at what is now Inwood, on the hill north of Spuyten Duyvil, were brought to

bear and to all appearances, as one historian says, with "great execution." The British commanding officer at once signalled for anchor to be hove up again and the ships proceeded to a point opposite Mount St. Vincent, where they lay to anchor once more.

As a result of the bombardment and the forcing of the North River there was consternation in the American councils. It was feared that the success of the four British ships might mean the passage of the entire British fleet of active war vessels, which cooperating with the British land forces that might be brought over from Staten Island and Long Island would mean the bottling up of the American forces or at least their withdrawal from New York.

As if to add to the dismay of the Americans the sound of the American and the British guns in action up the

river had scarcely died away before the roar of guns from the lower bay was heard. It was the fleet assembled there saluting the incoming main part of the fleet of Vice-Admiral Viscount Howe and the transports loaded with troops which had been convoyed from England.

Two days later, on Monday, July 15, the debarcation of the new troops, which included some of the best known regiments in the English army, together with the Hessian mercenaries, took place on Staten Island. There they joined other troops already set ashore, all in anticipation of their transfer to the Long Island shore, where, as latter events proved, the patriot forces were to meet defeat in the battle of Long Island.

At this critical point Congress sent to New York Capt. Ephraim Anderson, who had a scheme to destroy the British fleet by means of fire ships. Gen. Washington was willing that Anderson should make the attempt and in aid of the enterprise he provided all facilities, although "doubtful that it will be better in theory than in practice."

At the headquarters of the American forces deep anxiety prevailed. Several councils were held, at one of which the river had scarcely died away before the roar of guns from the lower bay was heard. It was the fleet assembled there saluting the incoming main part of the fleet of Vice-Admiral Viscount Howe and the transports loaded with troops which had been convoyed from England.

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is at Second avenue and St. Mark's place; one at St. Mark's in the Bowlerie and the other in the Second Avenue Baptist Church. A Fifth avenue stage carries children from a gathering place on Third avenue to the Church of the Ascension school and a wider use of the big buses is contemplated. It costs \$350 to run a school for six weeks, and the money is usually contributed by the church in whose parish the school is located.

Indomitable Putnam came forward with a plan which was no less than a proposal to block the great waterway at Jeffrey's Hook with sunken vessels.

Putnam's plan was attempted. The work was carried on at the water's edge at Jeffrey's Hook. The condemned vessels were brought along shore, to which point stones collected from the hill above were rolled or carried. Four vessels were chained and boomed and sunk close to the fort.

Meanwhile an attempt was in preparation to destroy the Phoenix and Rose by means of Anderson's fireboats. A schooner and a sloop of 100 tons were built at Poughkeepsie and worked down at night to Spuyten Duyvil Creek. They were "filled to the tops of their decks with combustible wood dipped in pitch and with straw cut to the length of about one foot, bundled and dipped in pitch."

On the night of August 16 the attack was made. Manned by volunteer crews and towed by row galleys, the fireboats were towed up the river in a drizzling rain. The hostile ships were lying almost exactly opposite the fort. In the shadow of the Fallades they were not easily discerned.

The fireboats finally reached them, and their grappling irons were thrown aboard the Phoenix and the Charlotta, the former firing a broadside into one American boat. Matches were applied to the combustible and the American crews dashed overboard as the fire ran from point to point almost as quickly as though a powder train had been laid.

The Charlotta was burned to the water's edge and the Phoenix was only saved after a great effort. Seventy English seamen were lost, several Americans were drowned, while one of the bravest who set fire to the schooner was burned to death before he could jump overboard.

The disturbing effect of the attack upon the enemy was soon apparent. The British commanders stood only one more night of anxiety before hoisting anchor and on Sunday, August 18, drove down the river before a fresh northeasterly wind. As they drew within the fire zone of Fort Washington and Fort Constitution they were met by a furious cannonade.

The Americans were in high hopes that the obstructions would block the passage of the enemy, but an American had deserted the British ships a few nights before and had told the British commander of the obstructions and pointed out a gap which was to have been closed a few days later. By means of the information he gave the ships passed through.

The Phoenix was hulled three times by roundshot from Fort Washington, while the Rose was hit by a shot from the redoubt at the foot of the hill near Jeffrey's Hook.

As the ships went on down the river a continuous salute of fire greeted them from the batteries on the lower part of the island, to which they replied. They were followed to the Narrows by American row galleys which played snarling upon them.



Monument on site of American redoubt in Fort Washington Park (1890-95) which engaged British Fleet July 1776



Old Map showing siege of New York



Old American redoubt near water's edge on Fort Washington Point (1776) which engaged the British Fleet July 1776